

## **PAWG DFO Briefing 11/8/2011**

### **Lands and Minerals Division**

Riley Ridge Project - The Rands Butte plant should be operational by the end of this year. The sale of all Cimarex assets to Denbury is complete. Denbury is proposing to drill another well further up the ridge west of the plant. They already have approval to drill this second well from an existing pad but they now believe the horizontal reach is too much. BLM will consider the proposal when it is submitted.

Electrification of the Anticline – Rocky Mountain Power (RMP) has proposed to build electric distribution lines to provide power to eight distinct locations on the south end of the Anticline, both north and south of Highway 351. The BLM PFO has developed an interdisciplinary team and is working with the third-party contractor to initiate the development of the Environmental Assessment. Public scoping for the project will begin as soon as RMP can perfect their application. Project stalled as RMP negotiates route over private land on New Fork River. The distribution lines will tie into the sub-station at Paradise.

NPL EIS – Proposal to drill 3500 wells south and west of the Jonah Field. Scoping report is on the web. Held mtg with cooperators on Sept 8, 2011 to discuss cumulative impacts analysis. BLM working with third party contractor to refine the alternatives that will be considered in the EIS. The air quality modeling protocol is being finalized in early November, and we are working with EPA and DEQ on structuring the alternatives to recognize the potential ozone non-attainment status of Sublette County. Release of Draft EIS scheduled for Summer 2012.

LaBarge EIS – LaBarge EIS – Proposal to drill 838 wells in the Big Piney – LaBarge area. Alternatives guidance is in final development before interagency reviews, to be followed by the writing of the alternatives for the EIS. We currently estimate that a public version of the draft EIS should be ready by the first quarter of 2013.

Encana's multi-well pad proposal – Encana has proposed to conduct year-around drilling on the Northern portion of the Jonah Field. Encana has not fully developed this end of the field due to the wildlife timing restrictions limiting the time allowed for development. Their proposal is to drill multiple wells from 12 distinct locations with up to 14 wells from a single pad. This is a variance from their general past practice of drilling one well per pad but the proposed action would allow for completing the development of the Jonah Field sooner and would reduce surface disturbance. Encana completed their draft proposal on July 15<sup>th</sup>. The BLM signed an memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Encana last week and will work with the third-party contractor to write the Environmental Assessment. Scoping on the proposal will be conducted soon.

### **Well spud report**

Annual Drilling Plans, Anticline – The Pinedale Field Office has approved the drilling plans for the Anticline Operators that describe their drilling plans for the period between Feb 2011 and

Feb 2012. As of October 27, a total of 1970 wells have been spud on the Anticline, 1,062 since the signing of the ROD and 286 thus far this calendar year.

## **Resources Division**

### National Public Lands Day

The PFO and BTNF, Pinedale Ranger District partnered to promote a NPLD event at the popular CCC Ponds Recreation Area near Pinedale. Volunteers including BLM and USFS staff completed tasks planned to enhance the visitors experience and protect resources. With volunteer help, trails were cleared of brush, a picnic table retrofitted for wheel chair accessibility, blue bird houses repaired, a warming hut cleaned and painted, shoreline stabilized to improve fishing access for children, a complete replacement of area trail signs, and a new bench and commemorative plaques installed.

As a special celebration of the CCC Pond Recreation Area, the BLM archaeologist Sam Drucker presented with pictures and narration, a history of the Civilian Conservation Corp at Camp Fremont. Also, in recognition of volunteers, the BLM, USFS and community presented Jack T. Doyle with a gift demonstrating our appreciation for his dedication to make the CCC Ponds Recreation Area a unique recreational amenity for the community and Pinedale visitors. Sponsors for the event included the Sublette County Weed and Pest, Sublette County Conservation District, Sublette County Chamber of Commerce, Sublette County School District, regional oil and gas companies: Encana, Ultra, QEP and Shell.

### Other Recreation Program Activities

Other highlights of the PFO recreation program focused on the Warren Bridge Recreation Area which includes 12 miles of river access and the Warren Bridge Campground. Using the Wyoming Conservation Corp (funded by Encana), trail construction and signing the Warren Bridge Hiking Trail were completed (ARRA Funded). The WYCC also placed fence to protect trees planted last year to provide future Bald Eagle nesting habitat (ARRA Funded). Warren Bridge and Scab Creek RMA roads were graveled and strengthened with magnesium chloride (ARRA Funded). The ongoing improvements to the WBRA continued with the installation of traffic counters, new visitor use signing as well as the construction of a three panel portal kiosk to display completed WBRA area use and interpretive panels.

Several improvements for the Warren Bridge Campground (fee site) were completed this year that include the construction of two kiosks, and the installation of a septic waste disposal system for the camp host site. Additional trees were planted and a traffic counter installed.

New on-the-ground recreation development projects initiated with JIO mitigation funding were the East Fork Confluence /New Fork River access and Boulder Lake Campground fence and kiosk construction.

#### Wyoming Front Range Aspen Regeneration Project

In 2011 the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation decided to pull out of the Wyoming Front Aspen Regeneration project because of liability concerns it had with hiring contractors to complete field work. As a result no new work was completed in the summer field season of FY11. The BLM plans to continue on with the project in FY12. The NEPA and related clearances are complete for the planned 602 acres in the Miller Creek area that was targeted for completion in FY11 and will be completed in FY12. The activities in Miller Creek will include cutting and piling of selected conifer trees and the cutting of some older Aspen in an effort to stimulate more suckering within the clones.

Of the 767 acres planned for Rx burning in 2011, 100 acres were actually burned in the Camp Creek unit? Optimal burn conditions deteriorated due to rain during the burn which prevented us from fully treating what was planned. The BLM plans to implement a prescribed burn in the Upper Billies allotment in the Spring of 2012 as well as burning the remaining stands in the Camp Creek project area that were not completed in the Spring burn of 2011.

Muddy Creek Spike – The intention of this proposed action is to enhance Mule deer habitat in the South LaBarge area. The EA is complete and a decision record approving the project was signed on 9/12/2011. The treatment may occur this fall depending on weather and the availability of a pilot.

#### Creeks and Communities Workshop

As part of this project, a community workshop was conducted in July so people could learn more about this effort, the upcoming riparian assessments and how they could be involved. In August, agency personnel, accompanied by a number of stakeholders, completed on-the-ground riparian assessments for determining existing condition. The table below illustrates the results of the assessments.

<b>Rating</b>	<b>PFC</b>	<b>FAR/up</b>	<b>FAR/na</b>	<b>FAR/d</b>
<b># of segments</b>	20	3	18	8
<b>Miles</b>	22.25	1.75	27	12.75

### Resource Advisory Council

On 11/12 and 11/13, the PFO sponsored the fall 2011 RAC meeting. This meeting consisted of a 1 day field tour to the Anticline gas field where numerous range improvement treatments were visited and a 1 day office session was held to discuss various issues in PFO and around the state.

## **JIO/PAPO Division**

### **Wyoming Department of Agriculture** (Windy Kelley – Ag Program Coordinator)

#### Anticline

JIO/PAPO staff quantitatively and qualitatively monitored 11 well-pads in the Anticline, and qualitatively monitored approximately 100 locations. Additionally, we spent a day in the field with two separate contracts and one gas company.

JIO/PAPO staff spent several hours in the field looking at and discussing the state of reclamation with Pinedale Field Office management and staff.

PAPO interagency staff have provided recommendations on seed mixes, reviewed and commented on Weed Management Plans, among other day to day tasks that arise related to the Pinedale Anticline. Additionally, the JIO/PAPO Data Manager continues to inform the development of the Pinedale Anticline Data Management System (PADMS). This has included a number of meetings between the USGS and the PAPO, as well as meeting with right-of-way (ROWs) operators in the field to discuss how to best capture ROWs in the database.

#### Jonah

The JIO/PAPO staff visited the Jonah Field on a number of occasions to monitor locations that EnCana requested roll-over. They were the only Jonah Infill gas operator that requested roll-over for the 2011 monitoring season. Additionally, staff spent two days this summer with EnCana's Reclamation Specialist (Ralph Swift) on one of the day's EnCana's monitoring contractor joined us. EnCana requested 42 well-pads be considered for roll-over in 2011. They prioritized the locations to be considered for roll-over; 18 were high priority, 6 were moderate priority, and 18 were low priority.

JIO/PAPO staff provided recommendations on seed mixes, among other day to day tasks that arise and are related to the Jonah Infill. Additionally, staff have continued to be involved with due diligence related to the management of the Jonah Infill Data Management System (JIDMS).

#### Mitigation

JIO/PAPO staff have participated in several meetings and field visits to discuss potential mitigation projects. They are continually providing information about how to apply for JIO/PAPO funds.

JIO/PAPO staff participated in monitoring the 2010 fertilization project. They also followed up and are in the process of completing the Revised Arambel project, which included monitoring pellet transects.

## **Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality – Air Quality**

(Jeni Cederle – Cheyenne office)

### Ozone Contingency Plans (OCP)

To address episodic and elevated levels of ozone in the winter, PAPA operators are required to develop contingency plans for short-term reductions in VOC and NO<sub>x</sub>. Starting with the winter of 2011 (Jan. – Mar.) these plans were standardized by WDEQ-AQD. An initial “Annual Ozone Contingency Plan (OCP)” checklist represents emissions reduction activities *anticipated* to be completed by each company on an Ozone Action Day and is submitted to the AQD only once prior to the start of the ozone forecasting season.

Throughout the winter the AQD will forecast daily for weather conditions conducive of ozone formation. Ozone contingency plan implementation will be initiated by the declaration of an Ozone Action Day. An “Event Summary” checklist is to be completed and submitted to AQD for each Ozone Action Day declared during the ozone season. This additional event-specific checklist will indicate measures *actually* completed during each Ozone Action Day.

PAPA operator “Annual OCP’s” will be posted on the BLM Pinedale FO website once they have been submitted to the AQD. (Dec. 2011)

Standardized OCP checklists can be found online at Wyoming DEQ’s Sublette County Ozone information page (<http://deq.state.wy.us/aqd/Ozone%20Main.asp>) or requested electronically through Brett Davis, [brett.davis@wyo.gov](mailto:brett.davis@wyo.gov)

## **Wyoming Game & Fish Department and BLM Biologist update**

### October 26, 2011 Annual Wildlife Planning Meeting

The annual meeting had 44 participants which went well. The meeting agenda is online at the PAPO website.

### Sublette Mule Deer Assessment

As a member of the interagency JIO/PAPO staff, Game & Fish Habitat biologist Dan Stroud spent most of the 2011 field season working on the “Sublette Mule Deer Assessment” which is a landscape-scale qualitative habitat assessment that will likely become the basis for a number of mule deer habitat enhancement projects. A key component of Dan’s assessment is his recommendation to begin mule deer habitat enhancement projects in areas that can provide critical forage during transitional periods (with emphasis during the spring period - a time when the deer are in dire need of high energy and palatable vegetation). Dan presented this information at the October 26<sup>th</sup> *Annual Wildlife Planning Meeting*.

Dan also worked on the “*Mesa Sagebrush Fertilization Project*” that entailed planning, data collection and implementation. More information on this project is described below.

Another work project Dan worked on is the “*Enhanced Seed Mix Trial*” which – when implemented - may result in improved habitat for mule deer, sage grouse and other species.

#### Wildlife Monitoring/Reclamation Projects

JIO/PAPO interagency staff member Therese Hartman of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department worked with contractors to develop wildlife monitoring reports on the following wildlife-related topics: pygmy rabbit, white-tailed prairie dog, raptors, sage grouse, snow depth/traffic, pronghorn and mule deer. All of these topics were presented at the *Annual Wildlife Planning Meeting held on October 26*. The following wildlife monitoring reports currently are available on the PAPO website: bald eagle winter roost monitoring report, mule deer monitoring and snow depth/traffic summary. Reports on white-tailed prairie dog, pygmy rabbit and sage grouse should be available on-line by January 31, 2012.

Therese also worked with Wyoming Department of Agriculture representative Windy Kelley, also of the JIO/PAPO interagency staff, on reclamation monitoring on the Anticline and represented Game & Fish at gas field operator planning meetings.

#### BLM Wildlife Biologist (Theresa Gulbrandson) – Sagebrush Fertilization Project

Based on the success of the 468 acre Anticline fertilization project that Theresa worked on, another 1,000 acres of sagebrush habitat are planned to be fertilized in late Fall on the Mesa. Theresa completed the environmental documents necessary for implementation of the fertilization projects. Additional fertilization projects may be implemented based on the success of the two pilot projects.

#### Data Management

Duane Bays (BLM GIS/Database Specialist) worked on development of the “Pinedale Anticline Data Management System” (PADMS) with USGS Fort Collins Science Center staff. The primary purpose of the PADMS database is to depict operator data relating to reclaimed areas on roads, pads and pipeline ROW areas. To explain how PADMS works, a workshop was held at the BLM office in Pinedale on October 18<sup>th</sup>. A second PADMS workshop was held Nov. 7<sup>th</sup>.

#### Other JIO/PAPO items

- The next JIO/PAPO Executive Committee meeting will be held in Cheyenne on December 1, 2011. Staff will be preparing the agenda and briefing packets for the meeting to be mailed out to the Executive Committee by November 16, 2011.
- The JIO/PAPO project application deadline period was October 31, 2011.

### **PFO Staffing update**

- The new TERM NRS, Dean Whitt, reported to duty August 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Hired two new PETs. Michael Golthrite reported to duty on October 24 and Eric Ashley will report on November 7<sup>th</sup>.
- Have made a selection on the Petroleum Accounting Technician. Job will be offered soon.
- Other vacant positions that we are still working to fill include; Rangeland Management Specialists, one Supervisory Rangeland Management Specialist, and one Office Automation Clerk, and two Natural Resource Specialists.
- Archaeologist has been selected and is awaiting WYSO approval to fill vacancy.
- John MacDonald took a BLM Field Manager position in Yuma, Arizona. Eric Decker was hired in late September to replace John as the JIO/PAPO Project Coordinator.
- Catharine Woodfield, geologist, left BLM to work for the Forest Service.

## **Office Calendars**

### Previous Calendar

Aug 6, Pinedale Anticline SEIS Record of Decision Workshop

Aug 8, Annual Planning Meeting for air water and socioeconomics

Aug 22 week, Riparian Proper Functioning Condition workshop – field data collection

Oct 12, 13 Wyoming Resource Advisory Council Meeting, Pinedale

Sept 17 National Public Lands Day Observance event CCC Ponds (see event summary)

### Upcoming Calendar

Nov 2-3, National Riparian Service Team Creeks and Comm closeout workshop in Marbleton.

Nov 15, Drift Meeting in PFO with interested parties.

Nov 21, Due date for Nominations to the two vacant positions on the PAWG

Dec 1, JIO/PAPO Executive Committee meeting in Cheyenne

Feb 22, Anticline Annual Planning Meeting for development